

The Facts About Critical Groundwater Designation



What is the problem with Arkansas's groundwater?

Arkansas has an abundance of good quality groundwater. However, some parts of the state are not so fortunate. The groundwater supply is being depleted faster than the rate of recharge. If this trend continues, it will result in permanent damage to the aquifers and a serious groundwater shortage. Measures must be taken to protect the state's precious groundwater supply. This can be done by reducing the use of groundwater through conservation and use of excess surface water.

What is a critical groundwater area?

Pursuant to Act 154 of 1991, the Arkansas Natural Resources Commission designates a critical area after notice and public hearings which are based upon monitoring and scientific review. The critical area is defined based on significant groundwater declines and/or water quality degradation. Boundaries are based on the natural hydrogeologic boundary of the aquifer.

What does it mean to be in a designated critical groundwater area?

Being designated a critical groundwater area recognizes the existence of a water quality or quantity problem and encourages local interests to develop a plan of action to address the problems. Designation will encourage Congress, the Arkansas Legislature, state and federal agencies to place a higher priority on commitment of resources to implement solutions.

What is in it for me?

Designation makes an area priority for state and federal programs such as tax credits and cost sharing programs.

Can being designated critical negatively affect my community?

No. This is a non-regulatory program, which focuses on conservation and education programs. These programs include state tax incentives for the installation of water conservation practices.

Will regulation be imposed as a result of designation?

No. There is no regulation of water associated with critical area designation. Regulation cannot be initiated without a new process involving lengthy legal proceedings, additional notice, and public hearings. Regulation has not been proposed anywhere in the state.

Will water use fees result from designation?

No additional fees of any kind are authorized by designation

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